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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000083

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AF/S FOR D. MOZENA, B. NEULING
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE, D. TEITELBAUM

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)

SUBJECT: TURMOIL AND INTRIGUE CONTINUE IN RUN-UP TO ZANU-PF PRIMARIES

REF: (A) 04 HARARE 2090 (B) 04 HARARE 2063 (C) 04
HARARE 2001

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.5 b/d

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: Harare's headlines continue to be dominated by tales of intra-ZANU-PF conflicts and a spy scandal in the run-up to the ruling party's parliamentary primaries scheduled for January 15. Plans to reserve a quota of seats for women appears to be the method of choice for dislodging candidates not favored by the party leadership, but with primaries just a day away, the party has yet to release a slate of approved candidates. Latest reports indicate many party moderates will join hard-liners as casualties in an exercise that seems geared principally to perpetuate lock-step loyalty and top-down decision-making within the party. Political violence here continues to be principally within the ruling party, with more ZANU-PF supporters being arrested each week. The GOZ has announced it is finally repossessing farms from prominent figures who received more than one farm under land reform. Finally, the official press identified South Africa as the government implicated in the espionage ring, but public details about the affair remain scant, fostering rumors that continue to fan witch-hunt atmospherics within the ruling party. END SUMMARY.

No Candidates for Election Two Days Away

¶12. (C) As of January 13, ZANU-PF had yet to approve a final slate of candidates for the party's January 15 parliamentary primaries. State radio on January 14 announced that 48 of the 120 districts would be contested in the primaries. The politburo and presidium (the party's four senior figures, including the President) reportedly had approved a final list that would be publicly announced on the 14th.

¶13. (C) The nomination exercise has been hamstrung by the intersection of a host of competing factors: fall-out from the Tsholotsho debacle (reflets), recently announced limiting criteria for candidates (ref A), the party's efforts to implement a quota of thirty percent of the seats for female candidates, and appeals by disqualified candidates. Latest reports suggest the list of seats reserved for women will effectively exclude not only controversial Information Minister Jonathan Moyo, but a host of "moderates", many of whom do not appear to have been associated with the Tsholotsho confab.

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¶14. (C) Widespread disappointment within the party over the selection process for primary candidates has sparked well-publicized demonstrations, including one on January 4 at the party's Rotten Row headquarters in which Election Directorate head Elliott Manyika was prevented from leaving until he pledged to consider protesters' demands. Intra-party violence has continued to flare as well, resulting in additional arrests (and, as with arrested opposition figures, the speedy release) of ruling party supporters.

¶15. (C) Complicating the situation has been the absence of President Mugabe from the country through much of the ferment; he returned January 12 from a brief official trip to Tanzania following an earlier extended vacation in Malaysia during late December and early January. In his public addresses to party faithful, including an address to protesters at Rotten Row on January 10, Mugabe urged the party to rally behind candidates who were being selected "according to the wishes of the people" ... within "guidelines set by the party."

Senior Land Reform Beneficiaries Targeted

¶16. (C) The official press reported in early January that the GOZ was taking back farms from senior GOZ officials who had taken more than one farm under fast-track land reform. The measures begin to implement recommendations for a one person-one farm policy included in the Utete Commission Report completed in late 2003. Officials forced to surrender

farms reportedly include Moyo, Foreign Minister Stan Mudenge, Local Government Minister Ignatius Chombo, Deputy Minister for Gender and Youth Shuvai Mahofa, Deputy Minister of Water Resources and Infrastructure Tinos Rusere, and former Mashonaland West Governor Peter Chanetsa.

Spy Scandal Remains Obscure; South Africa Publicly Implicated

17. (C) After the Ministry of Information publicly admonished the nation's media last week to cover the espionage cases "responsibly", local coverage generally has receded from the front page and become markedly less sensational and speculative -- essentially limited to a chronicling of mundane aspects of court appearances and the like. During the past week, the official media has reported on the arrest of an unnamed official in the Ministry of National Security and the flight of Geneva-based diplomat, Erasmus Moyo, in connection with the widening investigation. The official Herald newspaper on January 14 reported without fanfare but in a front page story that Chiyangwa allegedly had been selling secrets to South Africa, which it implied may have been a conduit to other governments. An earlier edition of the Herald noted that three MDC officials were being investigated in connection with the matter, but our MDC contacts have been unable to confirm that.

Rumors Fuel Ferment

18. (C) The soft clampdown on espionage-related reporting has not stopped rumors from flying and contributing to escalating fear and loathing within the ruling party. Just before the spy story broke, a business figure close to the party told poloff that a rumor making the rounds in senior party circles had Speaker of the Parliament Emmerson Mnangagwa connected to the UK's MI-5. An internet news service reported recently that the probe was closing in on Mnangagwa, and another story pegged Minister of State Security Nicholas Goche and Minister for Local Government Ignatius Chombo as targets of the investigation.

19. (C) Rumors also continue to circulate about the Tsholotsho meeting that provoked the Old Guard crackdown

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against the Young Turks (reftels). Media contacts conveyed privately to the Embassy, but have not reported publicly,) that a meeting convened by some of the Tsholotsho participants in Bulawayo the day before the Tsholotsho meeting was plotting how to remove the President. The conspiracy reportedly included Reserve Bank Governor Gono and Security Minister Goche, and was known to President Mugabe. A contact of questionable reliability told the DATT that military officers were involved in Tsholotsho conspiracy, which had amounted to the plotting of a coup.

Comment

110. (C) We have found little to substantiate these rumors and doubt their credence. Nonetheless, they are significant as an indication of atmospherics in a party increasingly consumed by fear and loathing within itself. Deep individual insecurities and innumerable conflicting personal agendas will continue to stifle meaningful intra-party debate and drive more blood-letting built on misinformation campaigns and back-room plotting.

111. (C) The breadth of the effective purge underway has gone far beyond those implicated in the pecadilloes of Tsholotsho. While the purge of Moyo and other hardliners is welcomed by most inside and outside the party, other casualties include "moderate" voices, such as former Tribune publisher Kindness Paradza; respected parliamentary chairmen Lazarus Dokora, Charles Majange, and Paul Mazikana; and Eddison Zvobgo, Jr., the heir apparent to his late and widely respected father's powerful Masvingo Karanga faction -- all of whom enjoy relatively good rapport with the opposition and have been useful Embassy contacts. The common denominator among the purged is their respective independent streaks, whether hard-line or moderate. Their replacements generally will be individuals of little stature or resources and completely beholden to the party leadership to whom they owe their positions. In sum, these latest developments conform to recent trends that aggrandize Mugabe's stature and position at the expense of all others in the party.

112. (C) The various sources and indicia of turmoil within the party -- the Tsholotsho debacle, the espionage imbroglio, farm take-backs, and primaries-related conflict -- are all relevant to Mugabe's overarching priority of imposing discipline within the party. Nonetheless, each to some extent has its own impetus. Thus, developments will evolve to some extent independently, although we expect the leadership to try to shape them to advance overarching party

objectives. However, as these interrelated and complicated developments continue to unfold and influence one another, the possibility grows that they will spin out of Mugabe's control.

¶13. (C) The latest developments reinforce Mugabe/Old Guard dominance and suppress independent thought in the party but are not without risk to the ZANU-PF leadership. First, the alienation of so many significant party leaders and activists may diminish the party's turnout at parliamentary elections in March. Certainly, prominent coverage of ZANU-PF's turmoil and apparent disarray by both the official and independent press has not reflected well on the ruling party as it seeks to sell itself to the electorate. The party's absorption with its own crises also has taken the heat off the MDC, which is taking advantage of the hiatus to quietly mobilize its campaign troops without the concentrated official suppression efforts that hamstrung it in past elections. Finally, the environment is gradually becoming more conducive to the potential emergence of a third party consolidated from disaffected elements of ZANU-PF and the MDC -- a possibility raised by bitterly disappointed ZANU-PF members some time ago (ref C), although such a development still seems unlikely in the short term.

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